N°15

The *Rights* and *Duties* OF *Miniſters* and *People.*

A SERMON

Preached *Auguſt* 10*th*, 1721.

ON THE

Solemn Occaſion of the Settlement

Of the Reverend

Mr. THOMAS MILWAY,

In the *Paſtoral* Care

Of a *Church* of CHRIST

In *IPSWICH.*

By JOHN HURRION.

Son of man—Shew them the form of the houſe; and write it in their ſight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them. Ezek. 43. 10, 11.

LONDON:

Printed for JOHN CLARK *at the* Bible *and* Crown *in the* Poultry *near* Cheapſide. MDCCXXI.

Price Six-pence.

A SERMON

To the Reverend

Mr. THOMAS MILWAY,

And to the

CONGREGATION

under his Care.

Honoured and dear Brethren!

UNder what bodily infirmities the enſuing diſcourſe was deliver'd among you, is not unknown to you, and many others. That ſickneſs nigh unto death, which ſoon after ſeiz'd me, and for ſome weeks con-

fin'd me; together with remaining weakneſs, and manifold imploy-ments ſince, will, I hope, excuſe my ſo late compliance with your re-peated deſires of its publication; and I muſt confeſs, I could not now have conſented to it, had I not been afraid of keeping back any thing, that had been, or might be profitable to you.

The things inſiſted on in the fol-lowing Sermon, are, I am perſuaded, the truths of God. I have believed, and therefore have I ſpoken. But as to my management of ſo noble a ſubject, I'm truly conſcious of many Imperfections. What is mine, viz. *what is amiſs, I deſire God to for-give, and you to overlook: And what is God's, I pray him to bleſs, and you to improve. And I hope that you will employ your frequent and fervent prayers to God on this account.*

The Dedication.

I think we have all need, miniſters and people, to be put in mind of our duty, and have abundant reaſon to be humbled very deeply, for our great defects in the performance of it.

Your urgent deſire of having this Memorial of what you formerly heard, is owing, I perſuade my ſelf, to your love to thoſe truths and duties, which in a ſcripture-light appear certain and beautiful. May the following Sermon be a means to excite us all to a more full diſcharge of them.

The extenſive nature of my ſubject, my own indiſpoſition, and the other duties of the day, oblig'd me to omit many things; and but briefly touch upon others; which it might have been proper to have mention'd.

But if what was then deliver'd, and is now devoted to your ſervice, may be a means of God's glory, and

the good of ſouls: If you, or any others, who may peruſe it, ſhall thereby be recover'd from declenſions, or eſtabliſh'd in the faith and order of the Goſpel; I ſhall have abundant reaſon to bleſs God, for ſparing my ſinful and forfeited life, to do him and his intereſt any ſervice; and for giving me this opportunity of aſſuring you how much I am

Reverend, Sir, *and dear* Brethren,

Denton, *Norfolk*:
Nov. 15. 1721.

Your affectionate

and faithful ſervant

JOHN HURRION.

Hebrews

Hebrews XIII. 17.

Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves: For they watch for your ſouls, as they that muſt give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.

THE *Pen-man* of this moſt excellent Epiſtle, is, on the moſt probable reaſons, thought* to be *Paul.* The *Time* of his writing it, is not certainly known; but ſeems to have been not long before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* with the Jewiſh polity and government.— The *Perſons* to whom it was directed, were, either the *chriſtianiz'd Jews* in general, or elſe *the Church at Jeruſalem* in particular, mention'd *Acts* chap. 2. and elſewhere. The *Epiſtle* it ſelf

* Beza, Pareus, Owen, *and others.*

is

is ſo framed, as may ſuit the whole body of the Jews, and the ſeveral Chriſtian Churches among them: and was ſent, it may be, more immediately to the Church at *Jeruſalem*, by them to be communicated to others, as there ſhould be occaſion. In chap. 10. 25. he ſeems to ſpeak to them as *united* for *local communion*, and the duties of that fellowſhip.

In my Text the people are ſpoken to as an *organized Church*, in which there were the *rule and overſight* of miniſters, and the *obedience and ſubmiſſion* of the people.

In the words we have

1. The *office* and *work* of Church-guides *viz.* to rule the people, and watch for their ſouls.

2. The Church's *Duty* towards them, *viz.* to obey them, and ſubmit themſelves.

3. The *Motives* enforcing the diſcharge of their reſpective duties, *viz.* the joyful or ſorrowful *Account*, which will attend the performance, or neglect of them.

In diſcourſing upon theſe ſeveral branches of my Text, I ſhall obſerve the following method.

I. *Inquire, what theſe ſpiritual* Guides *and* Rulers *are.*

II. *What thoſe Churches are, to whom they ſtand ſpecially related.*

III. *What*

III. *What are the qualifications of theſe ſpiritual Rulers: How they are to be inveſted in their office, and what are the duties incumbent upon them?*

IV. *What is the nature and extent of that obedience and ſubmiſſion, due unto them from the people?*

V. *I ſhall add ſome practical inferences and reflections.*

I. *What theſe ſpiritual Guides and Rulers are?*

The greek word ſignifies a Guide, or *Ruler veſted with authority:* So 'tis apply'd to Chriſt, and alſo to *Joſeph.* ἡγούμενος. Mat. 2. 6. Act. 7. 10.

Setting aſide the diſpute, how far *civil Magiſtrates* are concern'd in the government of the Church, 'tis, I think, evident, that they are not intended in my text: For they were not Chriſtians when it was written; nor was it their buſineſs to watch for the peoples ſouls, as theſe Rulers are ſaid to do. It is therefore a ſpiritual, not a civil rule and government, which is ſpoken of in the text. The ſame perſons who have the rule over the people, do alſo watch for their ſouls.

The word which we render *watch*, ſignifies the moſt careful and diligent *Watch*, amidſt many troubles and dangers. (*a*)

(*a*) ἀγρυπνεῖν *curam & ſolicitudinem ſignificat*, Gerh. & Owen *in* loc. *It ſpeaks thouſands of Cares, Labours and Perils.* Chryſoſtom. *in* Rom. *p.* 226.

Ezek. 3. 17, 18. *ſon of man I have made thee a Watch-man to the houſe of* Iſrael. *When I ſay unto the wicked, thou ſhalt ſurely die, and thou giveſt him not warning, his blood will I require at*
2 Tim. 4. 5. *thy hand.* But *watch* thou in all Things, endure afflictions, make full Proof of thy miniſtry, ſaith *Paul* to *Timothy.* The miniſters of Chriſt ſtand in the front of the battle, between ſatan and the church militant: and therefore ought to be Men of courage and conduct, endow'd, not with
2 Tim. 1. 7. *a ſpirit of fear, but of power, and of a ſound mind.*

Mat. 23. 16. Iſa. 56. 10. Jer. 3. 15. They are Guides, but muſt not be blind Guides: But muſt feed the people with knowledg and underſtanding. They are ſpiritual Rulers, but muſt not be ſpiritual
1 Pet. 5. 3. tyrants, nor lord it over God's heritage:
2 Cor. 1. 24. For they have not dominion over their faith, but are helpers of their joy. He that
Luke 22. 26. is chief, ſhould be as he that ſerveth.

ὁ ἡγούμενος ὡς ὁ διακονῶν. Upon the whole, the office of theſe ſpiritual Guides and Rulers, is to conduct, and watch over the Church, in the Things of Chriſt, according to the will of Chriſt.

II. *What thoſe Churches are, to whom they ſtand ſpecially related?*

There is a Church myſtical and inviſible,
Heb. 12. 23 called in Scripture, The general aſſembly and Church of the firſt-born, and all the
Eph. 2. 21. building. This Church conſiſteth of all true chriſtians,

chriſtians, militant here below, or triumphant in Heaven.

But it is a particular, organiz'd Church which I am now to ſpeak of, deſcribed by the learned Dr. *Ames* *, as "A ſociety of "believers, united among themſelves, by a "ſpecial bond, for the conſtant exerciſe "among themſelves, of communion in holy "things." To which agrees the Church of *England*'s definition of a viſible Church.(*a*) The matter of ſuch a Church is, or ought to be believers. So the Churches mention'd in Scripture are ſtyled, all the holy brethren, the ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus, and called ſaints.

1 Theſſ. 5. 27. 1 Cor. 1. 2. κλητοῖς ἁγίοις.

Juſtin Martyr tells us †, that the Euchariſt was given to none, who did not believe the truth, and live as Chriſt appointed. And elſewhere ¶, that they had no communion with thoſe who were Chriſtians only in name. The primitive Church had, as is well known, its catechumens and penitents, *viz.* perſons in a ſtate of preparation for full communion ‖. They were firſt taught the principles of the Chriſtian Religion;

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* *Medull.* p. 142.

(*a*) Article 19. *The viſible Church of Chriſt is a Congregation of faithful Men, in which the pure Word of God is preach'd, and the Sacraments are duly adminiſtred, according to Chriſt's Ordinance in all thoſe things that of neceſſity are requiſite unto the ſame.*

† *Apol. ad Anton.* 42.

¶ *Apud* Scult. *Medull. Patid.* p. 37.

‖ *Vid.* Scult. *Medull.* p. 35.

then exercis'd in prayers, with faſting and the works of repentance; after that baptiz'd, and then joyned to the Church, and ſo admitted to the Lord's Supper.

1 Cor. 6. 9. The Scripture ſaith, *that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* And the Church at *Corinth* is commanded not to 2 Cor. 6. 14. be *unequally yoked with unbelievers*; and are 1 Cor. 5. 7. required *to purge out the old leaven, that* 2 Cor. 6. 15. *they might be a new lump: For what part* πίςῳ μετὰ ἀπίςε. *hath he that believeth with an unbeliever?*

'Tis an unaccountable charity to eſteem perſons, openly wicked and impenitent, to be endow'd with that faith, which purifieth the heart, and works by love. That unſound profeſſors may creep into the beſt ſocieties, is not deny'd; but that perſons, manifeſtly wicked and impenitent, were received into, or continu'd in the Primitive Churches, or ought to be ſo in ours, is what I believe can never be proved. The form of ſuch a Church as I am ſpeaking of, is mutual conſent and agreement among themſelves. It is not poſſible in the nature of the thing, that a free aſſembly ſhould be otherwiſe united for ſtated fellowſhip. Without this, the bounds of a particular Church could not be known; the members of it diſtinguiſh'd, or their reſpective duties diſcharged.— The conſent or agreement ſpoken of, may be only implicit and practical; but yet, that which is explicit, is for the benefit of the Church.

The

The Church of the Jews was conſtituted by covenant, and reform'd by renewing of it: And in the opinion of a very judicious and learned Divine* "Believers do not "conſtitute a particular Church, tho' many "of them may meet or live together in the "ſame place; unleſs they be joyned by "ſome ſpecial bond among themſelves: "for ſo one Church would often be broken "into many, and many confuſedly made "one.

This mutual conſent and agreement among the members of a Church, was the antient primitive practice. *Pliny* the Heathen, and *Tertullian* the Chriſtian, both take notice of it, as *Thorndike* (no Friend to ſuch Churches) is forc'd to confeſs†. This was foretold in the Old Teſtament, *Come let us joyn our ſelves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant* ¶, *that ſhall not be forgotten.* Jer. 50. 5. And we find it practis'd in Goſpel-times‖. TheChurch at *Jeruſalem* were *with one accord in* Solomon's *porch.* And though God's judgments upon *Ananias* and *Saphira* affrighted hypocrites from joyning to them, yet believers were the more added to the Lord §. So *Paul* aſſay'd to *joyn himſelf to the Church*; and the *Macedonians gave themſelves*

Acts 5. 12 13. 14.

2Cor. 8. 5

* Ames *Medull. p.* 143.
† *Principles of Chriſtian Faith. p.* 144.
¶ *Fœdere Evangelico.* Grotius.
‖ *In Regno Chriſti.* Calv. *in loc.*
§ *Vid.* Henry Mayer. Clark *in loc.* Aret. *in loc.*

ſelves to the Lord, and to their Miniſters by the will of God. (*a*).

There was ſome bond of fellowſhip, which ſo united ſuch and ſuch Chriſtians together, as that they were of this or that ſociety, when locally abſent from it. So *Oneſimus* and *Epaphras* were of the Church at *Coloſſe*, when diſtant from it. Some are ſpoken of, as within the Church, and ſo ſubject to its cenſures: which could not be meant of being in the Catholick Church; for the Church at *Corinth* did not extend their cenſures ſo far, as one obſerves †. Being within, muſt therefore mean, being members of that ſociety, by voluntary agreement, which gave them power and opportunity of knowing and cenſuring their offences.

Coloſſ. 4. 9. 12.

As to the extent of a particular Church, no certain boundaries can be ſet: According to the Goſpel-Pattern, it conſiſted of ſuch a number, as could, and did meet in one place, for the celebration of the ordinances of Chriſt*. So the Church at *Corinth* came together in one place: And the Church at *Jeruſalem* (after the three thouſand were added) continued together in fellowſhip. But as the numbers are not to be too

1 Cor. 11. 20. Chap. 14. 23. Act. 2. 42. 44, 46.

(*a*) *See Dr.* Owen's *Nature of a Goſpel-Church*, *p.* 22. *Brief Inſtruction* &c. *p.* 113.

† *Dr.* Goodwin *of Church-Government*, *p.* 53.

* Cypr. *Epiſtol.* 63. *p.* 177. Juſtin. *Martyr Apolog.* 2. *p.* (*mihi*) 43.

great

great for local communion, ſo neither too ſmall, to bear the offices, and celebrate the ordinances of the houſe of God.

The Chriſtians of a particular city, town or village, are in Scripture call'd a Church; as the Church at *Corinth*, the Church of *Cenchrea*: But the Chriſtians of *Provinces* or *Nations*, are called *Churches*; as the Churches of *Galatia*, the Churches of *Macedonia*, as including many particular Churches of the kind before deſcribed. Gal. 1. 2, 22. 2Cor. 8. 1

It is the undoubted priviledge and right of every ſuch Church, to chooſe their own Officers. So the Church at *Jeruſalem* choſe Deacons; and in other Churches, the Apoſtles ordained Elders, choſen by the ſuffrages of the people; for ſo the greek word primarily ſignifies, as many learned men* do grant. And it ſeems reaſonable, that a Chriſtian ſhould have as much liberty, to chooſe a guide for his ſoul, as a phyſician for his body, or a lawyer to ſecure his eſtate. For as his ſoul is of the greateſt worth, and his ſalvation of the higheſt importance, ſo the chief care is to be taken of that: and every chriſtian can beſt judge, what gifts are ſuited to his edification. And tho' many private chriſtians are not capable to judge of a miniſter's learning, yet in that point aſſiſtance may be had Acts. 6. 3. Chap. 14. 23. χειροτονήσαντες.

* Eraſmus, Beza, Calvin, Hammond, Grotius, Owen.

from

from others. The principal ends of the inſtitution of ſuch a Church are the glory of Chriſt, and the edification of his people, in the uſe of the ordinance, which Chriſt has appointed.

III. *What are the qualifications of theſe ſpiritual Rulers? How are they to be inveſted in their office? and what are the duties incumbent upon them?*

Jeroboam's vile prieſts were good enough for his brutiſh deities: But the miniſters of Chriſt, and guides of his churches, ought to be perſons of the moſt excellent endowments.

1 Kings 12. 31.

1. Such a ſpiritual guide ſhould be a perſon of *intellectual abilities*, furniſh'd with a competent meaſure of knowledge, that he may be able to behave himſelf aright in the *houſe of God*. As *a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*. He will meet with many dark paſſages in Scripture, to be explain'd: many ſcruples in his people, to be remov'd: many difficult affairs to manage; which require both learning and prudence, that the truth may be clear'd, the people edify'd and gainſayers convinc'd or ſilenc'd. And ſeeing the ſtreams are leſs pure than they might be, 'tis very deſirable, that he be able to have immediately recourſe to the fountain, and conſult the Divine Oracles in the

1 Tim. 3. 15. 2 Tim. 2. 15.

ſame

ſame languages, in which they were firſt given unto us.

He muſt be apt to teach; which requires a good ſtock of knowledge. And he muſt be vigilant, which requires a good meaſure of prudence and diſcretion. He ought to be inſtructed to the kingdom of God, and his lips ſhould preſerve knowledge. 'Tis very incongruous for one to undertake to teach the Truth to others, who does not know it himſelf. Such as rejected knowledge, God of old rejected from being a prieſt unto him. 1 Tim. 3. 2. Mat. 13. 52. Mal. 2. 7. Hoſ. 4. 6.

2. 'Tis requir'd of him that he be *ſound in faith.* He muſt *hold faſt the form of ſound words.* 2 Tim. 1. 13.

If the breaſt be unſound, how ſhall the chriſtian draw from it the ſincere milk of the word, and grow thereby? He then, who is to ſhew others the way of ſalvation, muſt hold faſt *the faithful word*, and ſhould have nothing to do with the corrupt teachers. Tit. 1. 9. 1 Tim. 6. 3, 4, 5.

3. He ought to be *exemplary in grace and holineſs.*

Elders are exhorted to be *enſamples to the flock*; and requir'd to be *ſober, juſt, holy, temperate.* 1 Pet. 5. 3. Tit. 1. 8.

It is the great work of the miniſtry to promote faith and holineſs in the people; and therefore 'tis moſt abſurd for them to undertake it, who in heart and life are enemies thereunto. He ſhould be a burning

ning as well as a ſhining light. The eyes of many will be upon him, when he comes into ſo high and publick a ſtation; and 'tis fit, that he who ſtands in ſo clear a light, ſhould be a perſon of the faireſt character. 1 Tim. 3. 2. Chap. 4. 12, 16 'Tis expreſly requir'd, that *he be blameleſs*, and *ought to take heed to himſelf as* well as *to his doctrine*. The people will then believe the miniſter to be in earneſt, when he lives the truths he preacheth to them; and his good works will carry more conviction with them, than the beſt words or arguments without them. If there be a war between a miniſter's life and doctrine, ſome will be at a loſs, which to regard and follow.* When his own ſoul is ſeaſoned with the Grace of God, he will be the more earneſt to do good to others. And 1 Cor. 15. 10. it will cauſe him, as it did *Paul*, to labour more abundantly. He is ill provided to ſeaſon food for others, who hath no taſt himſelf. The doctrine of Grace is beſt illuſtrated by the experience and effect of it, upon the miniſter's own ſoul: And he will be the better able to declare it unto others, when he has not only heard, but alſo ſeen, and handled the word of life, and has

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* *To be higheſt in Place and loweſt in Life: to ſpeak great Things, but do nothing: to have a grave Countenance but a light Converſation: great Authority, but no Stability, is a moſt odious Sight.* Bernard. *de Conſid. ad* Eugen. *lib.* 2. *fol.* 275.

fellow-

fellowſhip with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt. 1 John 1. 1, 8.

Faith is a Grace, wherewith a ſpiritual Guide ought to be qualified. When Chriſt enabled *Paul*, and put him into the miniſtry, he furniſh'd him with this grace. And he exhorts *Timothy*, *to be an example of the believers in faith.* How ſhall he recommend the truths of the Goſpel to others, who doth not believe them himſelf? Or how ſhall he bear up under perſecutions for Chriſt's ſake, who cannot truſt his promiſe, for help in this world, or a reward in that to come? All chriſtians ought to live by faith; but miniſters have peculiar motives ſo to do. A view of divine things by faith, will ſet them in a clearer light before him: And ſo help him the more uſefully to declare them unto others. By faith the Apoſtle *Paul* (amidſt all the labours and perſecutions of the Goſpel) liv'd and labour'd, fought and conquer'd, and finiſh'd his courſe with joy. 1 Tim. 1. 12, 14. Chap. 4. 12. Gal. 2. 20. 2 Cor. 4. 13, 16, 17, 18. Rom. 8. 37.

Alſo, the ſervant of the Lord muſt be *patient.* Many afflictions and adverſities which miniſters (of all men) muſt expect, require an eminent degree of this grace, to ſupport them under the fury of enemies, the frowardneſs of ſome under their care, and other trying events of providence, that in all things they may approve themſelves as the miniſters of God, *in much patience, in afflictions, in neceſſities, in diſtreſſes.* 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. 2 Cor. 6. 4.

Another qualification requir'd in this leader of the people is *courage*. That he may
2Tim.2.3 Chap. 1. 7, 8. be able, as a good ſoldier of Chriſt, to endure hardneſs; and not be aſham'd of
Eph.6.20. the teſtimony of the Lord; but publiſh the Goſpel with all boldneſs, being endow'd, not with a ſpirit of fear, but of power, and of a ſound mind. In the diſcharge of his office, he muſt not fear the anger of friends, or malice of enemies.
Gal.1.10. For if thro' a timerous ſpirit, he pleaſe men by ſinful compliances, how ſhould he be *the ſervant of Chriſt?*

It is alſo requir'd of ſuch as take this ſa-
1Pet.5.2. cred office, that they do it of a *ready mind.* A mind well affected to the people, and full of *love to Chriſt.* Otherwiſe they are
John. 21. 15, 17. unqualified to feed Chriſt's *ſheep* and *lambs*; or to be ready to be bound, or to die for the name of Chriſt, as they ought to be, if
Acts 21. 13. called unto it.

A good degree of *love to ſouls* is needful for every perſon who undertakes the charge of them. How dear ought they to be unto him! How affectionately ſhould he deſire them! How tenderly ſhould he cheriſh them, as a nurſe her children! and how willing ſhould we be (as the Apoſtle was) to *impart* to them, *not the Goſ-*
1Theſſ. 2. 7, 8. *pel only, but alſo our own ſouls.* But alas! how far ſhort do the beſt of miniſters come of this example?

A great

A great *love to truth*, is alſo requir'd of every ſteward of the miſteries of God. He muſt not be carry'd about with *every wind of doctrine*, of ſuch as lye in wait to deceive; but muſt ſpeak the truth in love; and do nothing againſt the truth, but for the truth. He muſt not *give place by ſubjection* to falſe brethren, *no not for an hour, that the truth of the Goſpel may continue with the people.* Ephes. 4. 14, 15. 2Cor. 13. 8 Gal. 2. 5.

He ought alſo to be filled with a great *love to peace.* He muſt follow *charity and peace with all them that call upon the Lord, out of a pure heart.* Peace is a valuable thing, and ought to be dear to every miniſter of the Goſpel; but ſtill it muſt be peace with purity, and peace with truth. Neither purity nor truth may be given in exchange for peace. To finiſh this, he ought to be furniſh'd with a great *love to all that is heavenly and divine.* His heart ſhould be in his work; and he ſhould give himſelf wholly to it. And truly, there is enough in it, to employ the ableſt head, and the beſt heart; and after all leave room to ſay, *who is ſufficient for theſe things?* 2 Tim. 2. 22. 1 Tim. 4. 15.

The proper *method of inveſting* a qualify'd perſon in the paſtoral office, comes next to be conſider'd. And this I take to be, by a call rightly given, and accepted, with a ſolemn ſeparation to the work, by faſting and prayer.

The

The office and the authority of it, are
Mat. 28. 18, 19. deriv'd from Chriſt's commiſſion. —— The people's call, and the miniſter's acceptance, are the orderly means of putting
Eph. 4. 11, 12. Chriſt's commiſſion into the hands of ſuch an officer in the Church.

The miniſterial authority is not from the people, but from Chriſt. The people's call, and the miniſter's acceptance, are acts of *liberty and duty*, in obedience to Chriſt's inſtitution, and in execution of his commiſſion.

The people call and chooſe him; but
Acts 20. 28. 'tis the Holy Ghoſt that makes him an *overſeer*. 'Tis he qualifies for the office, and in an orderly courſe of means inveſts him in it.

Elders were in the Apoſtles times, choſen by the people, and ſolemnly ſeparated
Acts 14. 23. to their office, by faſting and prayer. And in an inferiour caſe, the choice of Deacons, the right and liberty of the people
Acts 6. 2, 3, 5. was allow'd and preſerv'd by the Apoſtles themſelves: Nor were they abridg'd of it for a conſiderable time after.

Cyprian, who liv'd more than 250 years after Chriſt, tells us, that *Cornelius* was choſen *Biſhop* or *Elder*, by the teſtimony of the clergy, and ſuffrages of the peo-
Ep. 52. ple. And that another, (himſelf 'tis probable), was choſen by the ſuffrages of all the
Ep. 55. people. He declares it to be the people's right to chooſe the good, and refuſe the un-

unworthy: And tells us that *Sabinus* was made a *Biſhop* by the ſuffrages of the whole brotherhood aſſembled together. *Ep.* 68.

The laſt branch of this enquiry, is to mention ſome of the *duties* requir'd of theſe ſpiritual Rulers.

Theirs is a poſt fill'd with great care and labour, to give to every one his portion. The careleſs and negligent, will find that a dreadful charge. *Wo be to the ſhepherds of Iſrael, that do feed themſelves. Should not the ſhepherds feed the flock? Ye eat the fat, and ye cloth you with the wool; ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diſeaſed have ye not ſtrengthned; neither have ye healed that which was ſick; neither have ye bound up that which was broken: neither have ye brought again that which was driven away. But with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.* It highly concerns every paſtor, as he wou'd avoid this terrible charge, dilligently to attend his duty. Ezek. 34. 2, 3, 4.

1. To *feed the flock* in the uſe of the word and ſacraments. *He muſt take heed to all the flock, to feed them with knowledge and underſtanding. He muſt preach the word: Be inſtant in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon: reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-ſuffering, and doctrine.* He is not to ſtudy, what may be moſt eaſy for him to ſpeak; But what is moſt needful for the people Acts 20. 28. Jer. 3. 15. 2 Tim. 4. 2.

people to hear : And inſiſt upon the moſt ſeaſonable truths, and in the moſt edifying manner, ſeeking not his own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be ſav'd.

1 Cor. 10. 33. He muſt give *them meat in due ſeaſon.* And *bleſſed will that wiſe and faithful ſervant be, whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing.*

Mat. 24. 45. 46. The *babes* are to be fed with *milk*, and the ſtrong men with *meat.* He *muſt not ſhun to* declare *the whole counſel of God* ; or keep back any thing that might be profitable to the people.

Mat. 28. 19. Baptiſm and the Lord's-Supper, (the ſeals of the covenant), he ought alſo to adminiſter in their proper time and order.

1 Cor. 10. 16.

2. He ought to *watch* over the flock, to watch for their ſouls, inſpect their wants, and *warn every man*, and *teach every man, that he may preſent every man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus.*

'Tis his duty to watch over the purity of his people's faith, the purity of their worſhip, and the purity of their converſations: and have a careful regard to their peace, and growth in grace. After the Apoſtles example, he ſhou'd exhort, and comfort, and warn every one, as a father doth his children : His care and affection muſt extend not only, to the chief of the flock, or ſuch, as have by their kindneſs moſt engag'd his affections : But all, even the meaneſt, ſhou'd have a ſhare therein. Every one has a precious ſoul to be regarded ;

ed; and a Paſtor ought to be a common father to all his people.

3. It is his Duty to endeavour the Converſion of Souls, and *to build up the Church*, by bringing the converted into ſtated and full communion. For this end has Chriſt given Paſtors and Teachers, for the perfecting, or jointing in of the Saints, as the ſeveral parts of a building are put together, as the Greek word ſignifies *. And as the ſeed of the Church are born under the Covenant, and ſolemnly devoted to God: So 'tis the paſtor's work, to take particular care of them, pray for them, inſtruct 'em, reprove and encourage 'em, as there is occaſion: And do all he can, to bring them to recognize, and publickly own the Covenant when adult. Ephes. 4. 12.

4. Another part of his duty is to *exerciſe Chriſt's authority*, in the rule and diſcipline of the Church. As in the admiſſion of members, admonition of offenders, and their excluſion, if they continue obſtinate. He is not the Church's ſervant, to execute their will, but an officer of Chriſt, cloth'd with authority, to execute his laws, and in his name require obedience thereunto. He is to ſerve the people's beſt intereſt, in adminiſtring the affairs of Chriſt's Kingdom; but is not requir'd to be ſubject to the commands, or humours 2 Cor. 4. 5.

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* καταρτίζω *Coagmentare & apte Componere, Significat.* Tarnov.

of the People; for ſo he ſhould not be the
Gal. 1. 10. *ſervant of Chriſt.*

This duly attended to, would at once ſecure the *honour* of the *miniſtry*, and all due *liberty* to the *people*, whilſt the laws of Chriſt are made the meaſure of the authority of the one, and of the obedience of the other. *Theſe things*, (*viz.* the doctrines and precepts forementiond) *ſpeak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority.*
Tit. 2. 15. *Let no man deſpiſe thee*, ſaith *Paul* to *Titus*. Miniſters have Authority, to require obedience to Chriſt's will, tho' not to their own wills. And there is a power ready to revenge all diſobedience, when the peo-
2. Cor. 10. 6. ple's obedience is fulfill'd.

5. It is his duty to *pray with, and for the Church*. He is to be their mouth to God in publick; and they are to be much upon his heart in private. So *Epaphras*, who was Miniſter to the *Church* at *Coloſſe*, abounded in fervent prayers for them.

IV. *What is the Nature and Extent of the Obedience requir'd of the People.*

Πείθεσθε. The word in my Text render'd *obey*, ſignifies *Obedience upon Inſtruction and Perſuaſion*. Obey their doctrine, and ſubmit to their rule, as one expounds the words.*

* *Dr.* Owen, *in loc.*

It

It is not then a blind and forc'd obedience, but an intelligent, rational, voluntary obedience, which they are call'd unto: *Primarily* due to Chriſt, in the things which he commands them to believe and do; and *Secondarily*, due to the miniſter, as acting in his name, executing his laws, and not otherwiſe. The *obedience* and *ſubmiſſion*, requir'd of the people, is *ſpiritual*. 'Tis to thoſe who are over them *in the Lord*, and who *watch for their ſouls*. The *rule* of the people's obedience is ſpiritual, *viz.* the word of Chriſt. The *authority* whence it flows, is *ſpiritual*, *viz.* the authority of Chriſt; and the *means* and *end* of it, are *ſpiritual*, *viz.* the ordinances and glory of Chriſt; ſo that 'tis a ſpiritual, not a civil ſubjection, which the people owe to their ſpiritual guides. The authority of the civil magiſtrate, who is over the people, in matters of civil right and property, is not thereby deſtroy'd, nor invaded. *Chriſt's kingdom is not of this world.* And this ſhews the reaſon, why Chriſt did not annexd to the miniſterial office, ſecular pomp and grandure; nor oblige the people to obey them, as arbitrary or temporal lords. John 18. 36.

A ſpiritual ambition crept in very early among the Church-rulers; but Chriſt took care to check it, by telling them, that they ſhould not lord it over the people, or one another: Nor take ſwelling titles of va- Luke 22. 25.

nity, as the kings of the gentiles did; but ſerve one another, and the people in humility and love, as he himſelf had done.

The obedience which the people owe to their ſpiritual leaders, is an obſervation of whatever Chriſt has commanded. And his kingdom doth not conſiſt in *meats and drinks*; not in rights and ceremonies, but *in righteouſneſs, and peace, and in joy, and in the Holy Ghoſt.* Nor are the people to be drawn to this obedience by carnal force or policy. An eminent ruler in the houſe of God tells us, That the *weapons*, whereby he brought every thought into *obedience* to Chriſt, were not *carnal*, but *mighty thro' God.* And that he conducted himſelf, in and towards the Church, *not by fleſhly wiſdom, but by the Grace of God.* And truly, this is the moſt effectual way, to engage the people to that obedience to them, who have the rule over them, and watch for their ſouls.

Matt. 28. 18.

Rom. 14. 17.

2 Cor. 10. 4.

Chap. 1. 12.

The obedience ſpoken of, may be conſider'd, either as to the rule of it, the laws of Chriſt; and if Church-guides require, what Chriſt has not commanded, no obedience is due to ſuch injunctions. The extent of this obedience may alſo be conſider'd as to the ſubjects of it; and the whole body of the people, without diſtinction or exception, is in my Text call'd unto it. No perſons are too great, or too good (not kings or princes) to ſubmit to the Laws of

Mat. 15. 2, 13, 14.

of that King, whom God hath ſet upon his *holy hill of Sion. Every knee muſt bow, and every tongue confeſs to Chriſt.* In requiring this obedience, Chriſt's officers muſt do nothing by *partiality*, preferring one before another, or excuſing one more than another. Pſal. 2. 6, 10, 11. 1 Tim. 5. 21.

The people's obedience might alſo have been conſider'd, as to their perſonal or relative duties in general. But my time will allow me only to mention ſome of them, which they owe to their paſtors.

1. They are bound to *love* and *honour* them, as the miniſters of Chriſt, and eſteem them highly in love for their works ſake: And tho' miniſters may not think it ſo decent, to inſiſt frequently upon this: Yet the people have the rule plain before them, and ought to regard it, more than many do. And that would make both the miniſter's and the people's part the more eaſy, and their fellowſhip the more profitable. For I think, we muſt all aſſent to it in notion, how ſhort ſoever we come in practice, that the *body* is edified in *love*. 1 Theſſ. 5. 12, 13. Eph. 16. 4

2. The people owe to their paſtors *ſufficient maintenance.* 'Tis not an alms, but a due debt; for *ſo hath God ordained, that they who preach the goſpel, ſhould live of the goſpel. He that is taught in the word*, is commanded to *communicate to him, that teacheth him, in all good things.* The labourer in 1 Cor. 9. 14. Gal. 6. 6. 1 Tim. 5. 17, 18.

Word

word and doctrine, is worthy of his reward. And if miniſters *ſow unto the people ſpiritual*
1 Cor. 9. 11. *things, is it a great thing if they reap their carnal things?* All poſſible care ought to be taken in this matter, ſo to provide for them, as that they may be freed from the diſtracting cares of poverty; and have wherewith to do good to others. For as it is incum-
1 Tim. 3. 2 bent upon miniſters, to be *given to hoſpitality*, ſo 'tis neceſſarily incumbent upon the people to furniſh them with means for it.

3. Another part of the people's duty to their ſpiritual Guides, is *to attend upon their miniſtry*. For if they muſt obey them, they muſt receive the word of command. If they muſt be perſuaded by them, they muſt attend the word of exhortation and inſtruction. If the miniſter watch for the people's ſouls, as one that muſt give account, it is needfull for the people to abide under his inſpection; for how ſhall he watch over, or what good account ſhall he give of ſuch, as withdraw themſelves from his miniſtry, and come not under his eye, admonitions, or inſtructions? With regard hereunto, as I apprehend, this very Church, which in my text is commanded to obey, and ſubmit to them, that had the rule over them, is a little before enjoyn'd, *not to forſake the aſſembling of themſelves together, as the manner*
Heb. 10. 25. *of ſome was*. It is not an occaſional abſence, which may be unavoidable, but a cuſto-

cuſtomary forſaking Church-aſſemblies, which is there forbidden. And as a worthy perſon* has obſerv'd, Church-aſſemblies are the way of making profeſſion of ſubjection to Chriſt's authority, and are a means of ſolemn ſtated evangelical worſhip; and the exerciſe of that diſcipline, whereby the members are watched over. And as the forſaking of Church-aſſemblies is uſually an entrance into apoſtaſie; ſo it ſprings from an evil heart of unbelief, and is uſher'd in, by a previous neglect of ſecret duties.

To what purpoſe do the people ſolemnly put themſelves under the Paſtoral care, of a particular miniſter, and he take the overſight of them, if after all, they be not bound to attend his miniſtry, and abide under his watchful inſpection? But this duty is ſtrongly imply'd, when the contrary evil is ſo ſharply reprehended, as proceeding from the luſts of men, which cauſe them to heap up to themſelves preachers, (not contented with their own) and turn away their ears from the truth, becauſe they *cannot endure ſound doctrine.* 2 Tim. 4. 3, 4.

4. It is the people's duty to *pray* heartily, and conſtantly *for their miniſters.* One of the chief of them deſir'd (or ſhall I ſay, enjoyn'd) it. *Brethren pray for us, that the*

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* Owen *in loc.*

word

word of the Lord may have free courſe,
2Theſſ. 3. *and be glorified; and that we may be de-*
1, 2. *livered from wicked and unreaſonable men.* A miniſter's work is great, his obſtructions in it may be great from ſatan, and the world; and too often from his people, and his own heart. All his ſufficiency is of God. The glory of God, and the good of many ſouls, are highly concern'd in the ſucceſs of his labours. On all which account his people ought to be conſtant, and fervent in their addreſſes to God for him.

5. The people ought to *ſhelter* their miniſter (ſo far as they can) *from the violence of his Enemies*. And ſo far as truth and juſtice will allow, they are requir'd to defend him in his name, ſubſtance and perſon; that ſo he may be with them without
1Cor. 16. 10, 11. fear, ſeeing he works the work of the Lord, and ſhould not be unfitted for it, or diverted from it, by ſuch troubles as may be prevented or removed by the people.

6. The people are oblig'd to *aſſiſt* their miniſter what they can, *in keeping up the honour and order of the Goſpel*, in the ordinances and diſcipline of the Church. The
1Cor. 11. 22. Church of God muſt not be deſpis'd; nor its aſſemblies be vain and diſorderly.
Chap. 14. 33. *Holineſs becomes God's Houſe for ever.* And there the people ought to attend with wiſdom and reverence. Thus to behave, will make

make Church-Adminiſtrations beautiful and honourable; and cauſe others to joy and glorify God for their *Order*, and *profeſſed ſubjection to the Goſpel of Chriſt*. Col.4. 15. 2 Cor. 9. 23.

But 'tis time to haſten to the laſt thing propos'd.

V. *To add ſome inferences and practical reflections.*

I. *Inf.* How incumbent a duty is it, upon all the friends and members of Chriſt to put themſelves under his care and government in his Churches?

As it is the duty of thoſe already in fellowſhip to obey thoſe that have the rule over them, and to ſubmit themſelves; ſo 'tis the duty of other chriſtians, to unite with the Churches, that they may be watched over, and ſo obey, and ſubmit to Chriſt's government in his Churches. And this they ſhould do for *Chriſt's ſake*, for the *Church's ſake*, and for their *own ſake*.

1. Let the friends and members of Chriſt unite with his Churches for *Chriſt's ſake*. If you would ſhow your ſelves to be his friends, you muſt do whatſoever he hath commanded you. Did he not command his Diſciples, and in them all other chriſtians, to drink the *ſacramental cup*, and *ſhew forth his death*: Not ſee others do it, or permit them to do it, or applaud John 15. 14. Mat. 26. 27. 1 Cor. 26. 28.

them in doing of it; but actually do it your ſelves.

Theſe words, *you do ſhew forth the Lord's death*, may be, and are by ſome, taken imperatively, *do you ſhew forth his death* *. And the following words, *till he come*, favour this ſenſe. 'Tis the duty of the faithful in all ages, till Chriſt's ſecond coming, to ſhew forth his death, if there be opportunity for it.

How ſhall chriſtians ſhew a due reſpect to Chriſt's authority, in commanding it? or to the love of the dying Saviour, in leaving with his Church this Memorial of his grace and merit, if they make no uſe of it? Can they avoid ſhame, when they have not re-
Pſ. 119. 6. ſpect to all Chriſt's Commands? Can they ſhow due reſpect to the Covenant of grace, or to Chriſt the Mediator of it, who refuſe or neglect the ſeal of it in the Lord's Supper? Doth Chriſt take perſons into the Covenant, that they ſhould be aſhamed of it, or neglect ſome of the greateſt duties and priviledges contained in it? Will not Chriſt be aſham'd of them hereafter, who are
Mark. 8. 38. aſham'd of him and of his words in this world? and can any be ſo guilty, and yet unconcern'd?

Obj. But poſſibly ſome may ſay, we hope it is not from a contempt of Chriſt; but

* Eraſmus, Piſcator, Charnoc, *and others.*

from

from a ſenſe of our own unfitneſs, that we have hitherto delay'd communion with the Saints, in the Lord's Supper, and other Ordinances.

Anſ. A weak performance is better than a total neglect of any duty. We are all unworthy of the leaſt of God's benefits, but are not on that account to refuſe them. Nor ought we to think any thing too good for us to receive, which God doth not think too good to give unto us. Shall we limit his goodneſs, or reſtrain his bounty?

If you ſuppoſe that you are not in covenant with God, how will you approach his bar? And if you be, why may you not approach his table? If Chriſt be your Lord, how can you turn your backs upon his Ordinances? And what objections can be valid againſt a poſitive command? What if grace be weak, and fears ſtrong, are we firſt to get rid of our diſeaſe, before we make uſe of the remedy? or expect that Chriſt ſhould ſeal us to the day of redemption, whilſt we refuſe to ſeal to his covenant? And why may not all chriſtians neglect it, as well as ſome? And then, what would become of Chriſt's viſible glory in the world? And therefore

2. Do it for the *Church's ſake.*——Muſt not the building fall, if as ſome ſtones drop out, others be not laid in their places? If

there be not a ſucceſſion of members, how ſhould there be a ſeat of ordinances, or ſufficient numbers for fellowſhip? And ought not the Preſervation of the faith, and order of the Goſpel, to be very dear to every true chriſtian? and conſequently, ought he not to ſupport that building, which is the pillar and ground of truth.

1 Tim. 3. 15.

3. Chriſtians ſhould put themſelves under Chriſt's government in his Churches, for their *own ſake.—Sion is God's reſt for ever.* *There he commands the bleſſing, even life for evermore.* Chriſt has promis'd his preſence with ſuch, as gather together in his name; and ſurely, none of Chriſt's ordinances are ſuperfluous: Nor will he leave the higheſt ordinances the moſt empty.

Pſal. 132. 13, 14, 15. Pſ. 133. 3. Mat. 18. 20.

When all that can be, is ſuppos'd of unprofitableneſs under them, yet ſtill every Chriſtian ſtands bound in point of duty, to confeſs Chriſt, and keep cloſe to him, who only has *the words of eternal life.* He will be found of ſuch as *ſeek* him, but will *forſake* them that *forſake him.* Every true Chriſtian therefore, as he values the preſence, protection and bleſſing of Chriſt, the proſperity of his Church, and the comfort and benefit of his own ſoul, ſhould be prevail'd with to follow the Lord fully, and give up himſelf to the Lord, and to his People, by the will of God, to enjoy and obſerve

2 Chron. 15. 2.

obſerve whatever Chriſt has promis'd and commanded.

II. *Inf.* Are miniſters bound ſo to rule and watch, and the people ſo to obey and ſubmit themſelves, as has been declared? Then with what diligence and zeal ſhould you now, united in ſo ſacred a relation, endeavour to diſcharge your reſpective duties?

And this ſpeaks particularly to you, *Sir*, who have undertaken to feed and rule this *flock of Chriſt*.

How great is your work, as much as in you lye to declare to them the *whole counſel of God*, to watch over them in all their circumſtances, celebrate all ordinances among them, build them up in grace and numbers; go before them in the exerciſe of Chriſt's authority, and pray with them, and for them, as their caſe ſhall require. What ſtock of knowledge, faith, patience, courage, love to Chriſt, to ſouls, to truth, and peace, are requir'd of you! But alas! *who is ſufficient for theſe things?* I do not think (ſaith *Chryſoſtom* *) that many of the miniſters of the Church ſhall be ſav'd; but that much greater numbers will periſh. Doth not the Apoſtle *Paul*'s ſolicitude become every miniſter, leſt whilſt *he preacheth*

* *Hom. in Acta Apoſt. cap.* 1. *Com.* 24.

to

1 Cor. 9. 27. *to others, he himſelf be a-caſt-away.* And here give me leave to put you in remembrance,

1. That your *work* is *great*, very *great*. 'Tis ſoul-work, to watch for ſouls, the objects of God's eternal love, and the purchaſe of the blood of the Son of God. A charge of the higheſt value; and therefore ſhould be attended with the utmoſt diligence and care. The glory of Chriſt in his authority, wiſdom, grace and love, is highly concerned in it: And therefore you ſhould give your ſelf wholly to it.

2Theſſ. 2. 13. Acts 20. 28.

2. Conſider that your *account* will be *great*. All muſt be called over again, before Chriſt's tribunal: And a ſtrict enquiry will be made, how you diſcharg'd your truſt, and what was the effect of it. With what a deep regard thereunto, ſhould you manage your whole work, and not reſt in ſuch performances, as the people may accept at preſent: But ſo fulfil your miniſtry, as Chriſt may approve hereafter! How ſhould we ſpeak *as in the ſight of God, and labour, whether preſent or abſent, that we may be accepted of him: for we muſt all* (miniſters as well as others, and not for themſelves only, but alſo for others) *appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, and receive the things done in the body! Knowing this*

2 Cor. 2. 17. Chap. 5. 9,10,11.

terror

terror of the Lord, oh, how *ſhould we perſuade Men!*

3. Conſider, that there is *great aſſiſtance* for you. *Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world*, ſaith Chriſt to his miniſters. Faith in ſuch a word as this, has many a time ſupported the miniſters of the Goſpel, and carryed them comfortably on in their great and difficult work. If we be faithful, tho' all men *forſake* us, yet the Lord will *ſtand* by us, and we can *do all things, thro' Chriſt ſtrengthning of us*. *His grace is ſufficient* for you. O then truſt in him from whom is all your ſufficiency, to enable you to fulfill the miniſtry which you have received. Matt. 28. 20. Phil. 4. 13.

4. Conſider, that in the due diſcharge of your work, you may expect a *great reward*. Such as are faithful, tho' they be not ſucceſsful, are yet *a ſweet ſavour to God, even in them that periſh. But ſuch as turn many to righteouſneſs, ſhall ſhine as the ſtars for ever, and receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away*. 2 Cor. 2. 15. Dan. 12. 3. 1 Pet. 5. 4.

Suffer therefore the word of exhortation, *my reverend and dear Brother*; tho' you know theſe things, and be eſtabliſh'd in the preſent truths. The weight and importance of the work you are not ignorant of; and I perſuade my ſelf, that you will not be averſe, to be preſs'd to the accompliſhment of

of it, tho' by the meaneſt of your brethren.

That love to Chriſt which has inclin'd you to feed his *ſheep* and *lambs*, will I doubt not, prompt you, to employ thoſe uſeful gifts, which he has beſtow'd upon you, for his glory and their good: And cauſe you, after the example of the chief ſhepherd, to carry his *lambs in your boſom*, and *gently lead thoſe that are with young*. It will be your glory to follow him, who was gentle to the flock, *as a nurſe cheriſheth her children*; and to be willing to *impart to them not the Goſpel of God only, but alſo your own ſoul*, becauſe *they are dear to you*.

1 Theſſ. 2, 6, 7, 8.

Surely, we ſhould ſtick at no difficulties, ſo we might do good to ſouls: And how much is the life of our own ſouls, and the ſouls of many others concern'd in our miniſtrations! Did Chriſt ſhed his moſt pretious blood on earth, and doth he plead it in heaven for thoſe ſouls under our care: And ſhall we be careleſs of them, and yet be accepted of him, who has done ſo much for them? Doth ſatan watch continually to hinder us, and deſtroy them, and ſhall we be ſupine and negligent? If the watchman ſleeps, will not the enemy ſow tares: or may not grievous wolves break in and devour the flock?

1 Theſſ. 2. 18.
1 Pet. 5. 8.
Mat. 13. 25.
Acts 20. 29.

The Lord help us then to take heed to our miniſtry to fulfil it; that we may feed the flock, and *give every one his meat in due ſeaſon*;

ſeaſon; and ſo preach, pray, and live, as that *we may both ſave our ſelves, and thoſe that hear us.* Let us then through the grace of Chriſt *reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-ſuffering, and doctrine; doing nothing by partiality, but be an example to the believers, in word, in converſation, in ſpirit, in faith, in purity.* 1 Tim. 4. 16.

How great is the opportunity which we now have to honour Chriſt, and do good to ſouls. And when we look back and ſee, how much of our time is gone, and how little of our work is done, it ſhould ſtir us up to double our diligence and labour: Can we ever do too much? Can we ever do enough for ſo good a maſter as we ſerve? The Lord has made us watchmen and ſhepherds of his flock; and therefore we muſt attend our charge, tho' drought conſume us by day, and the froſt by night, and ſleep depart from our eyes. Does there not a *neceſſity* lye upon us, and a *wo* lye againſt us, if we preach not the Goſpel. May the Lord then enable us to ſpeak, and do all that he hath commanded us, without *fearing the faces of men, leſt he confound us before them.* Gen. 31. 40. 1 Cor. 9. 16. Jerem. 1. 17, 18.

Let us not then count our lives dear unto us, ſo that we may finiſh our courſe with joy, and the miniſtry, which we have receiv'd, to teſtifie the Goſpel of the grace of God. Let us ſpeak the things that are freely given us of God, not in *words which*

man's wiſdom teacheth, but which the holy
1Cor. 2. 13. *Ghoſt teacheth*, comparing *ſpiritual things with ſpiritual.*

How much dearer than our lives ſhould the ſervice of Chriſt be unto us, as it was to him to whoſe honour it is recorded,
Phil. 2. 30 *that for the ſervice of Chriſt he was ſick nigh unto death, not regarding his own life, that he might ſupply others lack of ſervice?*

May it pleaſe the Lord, who makes his *ſtrength perfect in weakneſs*, ſo to direct and aſſiſt us, in feeding and watching over the ſouls, under our care, that when we muſt give up our awful account, we may *do it with joy, and not with grief; for that will be unprofitable for us* as well as for the people.

But the peoples duty ſhould alſo be conſider'd: and the zeal and diligence with which it ſhould be diſcharg'd. For they are requir'd in my text, *to obey them that have the Rule over them, and ſubmit themſelves.*

Give me leave Brethren, to enforce this exhortation upon you, who have choſen a worthy perſon, to rule and watch over you. Be perſuaded to ſubmit your ſelves to him; pray for him, protect him from injuries, and ſtrengthen his hands what you can in the work of Chriſt.

As

As motives hereunto conſider,

1. That he is ſet over you by Chriſt's appointment, and acts in his name. And in obeying him, whilſt he executes the laws of Chriſt, you obey Chriſt himſelf; and he doubtleſs is worthy of it. And Chriſt will take your carriage to his Officer, as done to himſelf. For he that *deſpiſeth* him (doing the work of Chriſt) *deſpiſeth* Chriſt himſelf. Luke 10. 16.

2. Conſider, that he has the rule over you by your own conſent. You have called him to the work; and if afterwards you refuſe to ſubmit unto him, in the diſcharge of his office, you are ſelf condemned.

3. Conſider, what his work is, to watch for your ſouls. A work of great neceſſity, of great difficulty, of great kindneſs, and of great uſe. 'Tis for your own good, therefore obey him and ſubmit your ſelves.

4. Conſider his account. If you grieve his heart, and weaken his hands in the Lord's work, it may draw forth many a bitter complaint to God, and cauſe him to ſay with the Prophet, *but if you will not hear, my ſoul ſhall weep in ſecret for your pride.* And this account will be unprofi- Jer. 13. 17.

table to you. He that hears the cries of the widow, will he be deaf to the cries of his meſſenger? Will not he who made him a Watch-man, regard his account, and hearken to his juſt complaint?

5. Conſider, what matter of joy it will be to him, if he can carry to God good tidings of your faith, and charity, and obedience to Chriſt; and if you give him ground to hope, that you ſhall be his crown in the day of Chriſt. It will make him live, if you ſtand faſt in the Lord: and it may be very profitable for you, if by your faith and obedience you give him occaſion of rendring thanks to God for you.— But on the other hand,

1 Theſſ. 3. 6,7,8,9.

Chap. 2. 19.

6. Conſider, how dreadful a thing it will be, if when he gives up his laſt account, it ſhall appear, that Chriſt's authority has been deſpis'd, his ordinances abus'd, and his miniſter unduly treated: That any among you, for the gratifying of a luſt or humour, has leſſen'd his miniſter's crown, and loſt his own. How hard a bargain will this prove! How *ſad* an *account*, if this ſhall be the ſum of it, that your *miniſters labours are loſt*, and any *of your ſouls loſt too!*

2 Cor. 6. 2. Pſ. 68. 18. Epheſ. 4. 10, 11, 12.

Oh then, *receive not the grace of God in vain!* The Goſpel-Miniſtry, the ordinances of

of God's houſe, are the aſcention gifts of Chriſt. How highly then ought you to value them? How diligently to improve them? leſt they be taken from you, and the judgment denounc'd againſt the barren ground comes in their room. Heb. 6. 8.

We beſeech you therefore Brethren, to know him that labours among you. Know him ſo as to love him, honour and obey him. As he is ſet over you, ſo alſo he is bound to hard labour, and expos'd to greater troubles and temptations, than other men, and that for your ſake: And therefore you ſhould the more highly value him, and reſpectfully treat him. 1 Theſſ. 5. 12, 13.

Love will make your duty the more eaſy, and delightful. And the more you love Chriſt's intereſt and honour, the more will you love him, whoſe work it is to promote them. The *Corinthians* received *Titus* with fear and trembling, being deeply ſollicitous, that they might not offend or grieve him. Such a tender regard to your miniſter may knit his affections to you, and render his labours more uſeful among you; for *love beareth all things*, and *believeth all things*; and is indeed *the fulfilling of the law*. 2 Cor. 7. 15. 1 Cor. 13. 7. Rom. 13. 10.

To influence you the more to the ſubmiſſion and obedience requir'd of you, keep in view that account which your miniſter muſt daily give to God, of the good or evil ſtate of his flock. And take heed, that you give him no cauſe to do it with grief; for

for that will be ſtill a ground of greater grief to you.

To conclude all.—— As a means to pave the way to your other important duties, let me prevail with you, to eſteem your Elder highly in love for his work's ſake: and alſo to be at peace among your ſelves. And with reſpect to this *laſt* conſider, that the things wherein all good men do agree, are far greater than thoſe, wherein 'tis poſſible for them to differ. As therefore you have one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm, one hope of your calling, and one common enemy of your ſalvation, the fleſh, the world, and the devil; ſo you ought to *ſtand faſt in one Spirit*, each one being ready *to pleaſe his brother, for his good unto edification.* And for theſe important ends, may the Lord pour out his Spirit, and grace upon you, that you may more fully, and freely obey him, who has the *rule over you*, and *watch for your ſouls, as one that muſt give account; that he may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that will be unprofitable for you.*

Philip. 1. 27.

Rom. 15. 2.

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